

London

## 'Silent vigil' loudly protests anti-vaccine mandate at London hospital

Similar rallies were held across Canada Monday and faced criticism in every province

[James Chaarani](#) · CBC News · Posted: Sep 13, 2021 6:07 PM ET | Last Updated: September 13, 2021



Protesters gathered outside London hospital

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Over 200 people gathered outside of London Health Sciences Centre's Victoria Hospital campus in protest over vaccine mandates and COVID-19 restrictions on Sept. 13, 2021.

Several hundred people waving placards and making noise gathered outside the London Health Sciences Centre's (LHSC) Victoria Hospital Monday to protest vaccine mandates while local leaders accused them of being insensitive.

The rally was held in conjunction with others planned in 10 different provinces across Canada, all of which have been condemned by politicians and health-care organizations as unacceptable and unfair to staff and patients.

In London, several hundred people attended the rally organized by a group calling itself the Canadian Frontline Nurses. One organizer is a LHSC nurse recently [fired by LHSC for promoting conspiracy theories about COVID-19](#) and [attending rallies in the U.S. for those who think the pandemic is a "fraud."](#)

Gathered at the corner of Wellington Road South and Commissioners Road East, some protesters had megaphones while others cheered when vehicles drove by honking in support.





Protesters at the "National Health Freedom Movement" rally (James Chaarani/CBC)

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When asked why they chose to protest at a hospital, Gisele Baribeau, the executive director of the London chapter of Vaccine Choice Canada, said it was a busy intersection and the group wanted to show support for health care workers.

"It's an opportunity for people of London to drive by this intersection and see that not everybody agrees with what the government is doing, and often our voice is not heard," Baribeau said, who is not a health care worker herself.

Organizers say they oppose what they call "tyrannical measures and government overreach," adding that they are not encouraging nurses to walk out on their shifts or abandon patients.



More protesters at the "National Health Freedom Movement" rally (James Chaarani/CBC)

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On Monday, LHSC said it had increased security and was working with the London Police Service to monitor the protest. In an internal memo to staff, the administration also acknowledged how tired employees are right now and how the rally could increase their stress level.

- [Rallies against mandatory COVID-19 shots more a 'means of organizing' than about vaccines, says RNAO's CEO](#)

"You know, it's an absolutely disgraceful development and one I condemn in the strongest possible terms," Mayor Ed Holder said during the public health briefing Monday.

"Our health care heroes are stressed enough already, which should say nothing of the innocent, vulnerable patients, just seeking comfort and treatment. I say to those mindless mobs, How dare you?"

LHSC is currently treating seven patients with COVID-19-related illnesses. There have been 236 COVID related deaths in Middlesex-London.

- [1 death, 52 new COVID-19 cases in the London area since Friday](#)

"I think it's terrible that people protest at the hospital," said Tina Vallee, who was observing the rally from across the road at the strip mall. "The hospital should be a place where people don't have to cross through a picket line and be exposed to that."

This is the second rally organized by the Canadian Frontline Nurses held outside Victoria Hospital in London in recent weeks.

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The protests we're seeing outside of hospitals are selfish, cowardly and reckless. Our health care workers have sacrificed so much to keep us all safe during this pandemic. They don't deserve this kind of treatment — not now, not ever. Leave our health care workers alone.

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